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ABSTRACT

It has been suggested that individuals differ in the extent to which they monitor self-perceptions in social situations: high self-monitors use cues about the appropriateness of various types of behaviors to determine their social behavior, while low self-monitors control their social behavior by their own attitudes rather than by the demands of the situation. This view seems relevant to understanding the nature of leadership emergence. The effects of self-monitoring and achievement motivation on leadership emergence in a long-term field study of natural groups were investigated in a group of 81 university business students who completed coursework in groups of 6 or 7 members. Each student completed the Self-Monitoring Scale and the Achieving Tendency Questionnaire. Six weeks later, group members evaluated fellow members on influence and leadership. The results indicated that high self-monitors were perceived as exerting more influence and leadership than low self-monitors. Members high in achievement motivation were also seen as exerting more influence and leadership. The expectation that high self-monitoring would be strongly associated with leadership emergence for those high in achievement motivation was confirmed for males but not for females. (NRB)

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Self-Monitoring and Leadership Emergence

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Abstract

The research described here was directed toward furthering our understanding of the antecedents of leadership emergence in groups. Specifically, it examined the effects of self-monitoring and achievement motivation on leadership emergence in a long-term, field study of natural groups. It was expected that high self-monitoring would be associated with leadership emergence for those participants who also had high achievement motivation. The results indicated support for this prediction among male participants. The implications of these results for our understanding of the nature of the effects of self-monitoring were discussed.

Self-Monitoring and Leadership Emergence

The research described here was directed toward furthering our understanding of the antecedents of leadership emergence in groups (see Stogdill, 1981 for review). Specifically, it sought to identify important individual differences associated with this phenomenon. Although research on this topic has rather a long history, a recently developed personality measure appears to have the potential for offering a fresh perspective on this past research.

Snyder (1974, 1979) has suggested that individuals differ in the extent to which they monitor and control their self-perceptions in social situations. Some individuals ("high self-monitors") are particularly sensitive to cues about the appropriateness of various types of behavior and use these cues as guidelines to construct their social behavior. In contrast, the social behavior of other individuals ("low self-monitors") is controlled by their own attitudes rather than molded to the demands of the situation.

These ideas seem particularly relevant to understanding the nature of leadership emergence. Hollander (1964) has proposed that to emerge as a leader, individuals need to have both social sensitivity and the ability to modify and adapt their behavior. Research strongly supports the notion that high self-monitors possess both these characteristics. For example, evidence indicates that they are more socially sensitive (Snyder & Monson, 1975; Geizer, Rarick & Soldow, 1977; Dabbs, Evans, Hopper & Purvis, 1980) and better able to modify and adapt their behavior to what is demanded by the situation (Snyder, 1974; Lippa, 1976, 1978;

Tobey & Runnell, 1981). Recently, Garland and Beard (1979) examined the relationship between self-monitoring and leadership emergence in a laboratory experiment. It was found that chosen leaders in all-female groups, but not all-male groups, had higher self-monitoring scores.

The present study seeks to extend this past research by investigating the relationship between self-monitoring and leadership emergence in a natural setting. In addition, the present research seeks to clarify the relationship between self-monitoring and the motivational dynamics of the situation. It would be unreasonable to expect self-monitoring to be associated with leadership emergence when the motivation to manage one's impression is absent. In the present study, emergent leadership was strongly related to achievement and, for that reason, participants' achievement motivation was assessed. It was expected that high self-monitoring would be associated with leadership emergence for those participants who had high achievement motivation.

Method

Subjects

Eighty-one third-year business students (35 females and 46 males) at Wilfrid Laurier University served as voluntary participants. They were recruited for what was described as a study of group dynamics.

The Field Study

Third-year business students undertake all major assignments for their "core" business subjects in randomly-assigned groups of six or

seven members. They remain with the same group across all their core courses, for one four-month term. Individuals receive the same mark as other group members for each assignment. These marks are typically adjusted on the basis of peer group ratings on several dimensions. One of these dimensions is "leadership".

Procedure

Early in the term, participants completed a package of questionnaires which included the Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder, 1974) and the Achieving Tendency Questionnaire (Mehrabian, 1969). Approximately six weeks later, participants evaluated fellow group members on two dimensions relevant to leadership: how much influence was shown, and how much leadership was exhibited. The ratings of fellow group members were averaged for each individual.

Results

Participants were divided at the median on the basis of scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale and the Achieving Tendency Questionnaires to create groups low and high in self-monitoring and achievement motivation. Self-monitoring and achievement motivation were found to be uncorrelated ($r = 0.13$, ns). The evaluations made of each individual were subjected to a 2 x 2 x 2 (Sex x Self-Monitoring x Achievement Motivation) analysis of variance.

Participants' sex did not affect how much influence or leadership they exhibited in the group, both $F < 1$. As expected, high self-monitors

were perceived as exerting more influence, M = 3.57 vs. 3.33, $F(1, 72)$ = 2.71, $p < .11$, and exhibiting more leadership, M = 3.33 vs. 2.92, $F(1, 72) = 5.88$, $p < .05$, than low self-monitors. Participants high in achievement motivation were also seen as exerting more influence, M = 3.60 vs. 3.30, $F(1, 72) = 4.18$, $p < .05$, and exhibiting more leadership, M = 3.30 vs. 2.96, $F(1, 72) = 4.20$, $p < .05$. The expected interaction between self-monitoring and achievement motivation was not significant for either ratings of influence or leadership, both $F < 1$. There was, however, an interaction between sex, self-monitoring, and achievement motivation for how much influence they exerted, $F(1, 72) = 3.49$, $p < .07$, and how much leadership they exhibited, $F(1, 72) = 2.36$, $p < .13$. As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, the expectation that high self-monitoring would be more strongly associated with leadership emergence for those high in achievement motivation was confirmed for males. Male participants high in self-monitoring and achievement motivation were seen as exerting more influence, $t(72) = 2.45$, $p < .01$, and exhibiting more leadership, $t(72) = 2.43$, $p < .01$, than participants in the other three conditions. For female participants neither of these comparisions was significant, both $t < 1$. Unfortunately, the sample size in the critical high self-monitoring, high-achievement condition is sufficiently low as to preclude meaningful analysis involving female participants.

Discussion

The results of this long-term, field study of natural groups provide evidence consistent with the notion that self-monitoring is assoc-

iated with leadership emergence. Further, the results indicate that this relationship is especially strong when individuals are highly motivated to employ the skills characteristic of self-monitoring. Previous researchers have noted that the motivational properties of situations involving self-monitoring are often ambiguous (Danheiser & Graziano, 1982, Shaffer, Smith & Tomarelli, 1982). The results of the present study support the usefulness of an approach which investigates self-monitoring in conjunction with contextually-relevant motivation.

The present results provide encouragement for future research investigating the effects of self-monitoring on other aspects of leadership and group dynamics. Indeed, it would appear that this personality construct has the potential for furthering our understanding of a wide range of phenomena (e.g., impression management in organizations) that have remained largely unexplored in past research.

Table 1

Mean Amount of Influence Attributed to Participants as a Function of Sex, Self-Monitoring, and Achievement Motivation

	Self-monitoring	
Achievement motivation	Low	High
Males		
Low	3.33 n=7	3.11 n=10
High	3.34 n=16	3.90 n=12
Females		
Low	3.07 n=9	3.59 n=13
High	3.64 n=7	3.60 n=6

Note. Higher numbers indicate that more influence is being attributed to the individual.

Table 2

Mean Amount of Leadership Attributed to Participants as a Function of Sex, Self-Monitoring, and Achievement Motivation

	Self-monitoring	
Achievement motivation	Low	High
Males		
Low	2.77 n=7	3.00 n=10
High	3.06 n=16	3.66 n=12
Females		
Low	2.51 n=9	3.34 n=13
High	3.29 n=7	3.23 n=6

Note. Higher numbers indicate that more leadership is being attributed to the individual.

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